

May 19, 1975

SENATOR BEREUTER: I can't answer that. I don't know, Senator Schmit.

SENATOR SCHMIT: Thank you Senator Bereuter. I think the record is clear. The document that you have before you, that you're going to vote on, outlines very distinctly that the federal government has broken its agreement and has now extended its control of the billboard system beyond the original 660 feet, which we bought at one time. It indicates also that the federal government will stop nowhere. They will have no qualms about extending their jurisdiction into every area. I want to repeat the argument that I made last week when many of you were not here. We are going to be faced with the loss of some jobs, some loss of income to companies. We're going to be wiping out the outdoor advertizing business as it exists in the State of Nebraska today. We are taking out of business a legitimate business function. We are removing from the customer the opportunity to choose a type of advertizing which they have found that they perhaps approve of. The federal government has said in effect we cannot allow you to advertize along the highways. Now then I want to suggest also that if they will do this there is no reason why they cannot say that sometime in the future we'll allow you to advertize in the newspaper because of the shortage of wood pulp from which the newspaper is printed. Therefore, we can't afford that, it's a waste of a resource. I want to point out one more thing. Perhaps no one here, certainly not myself, is in the outdoor advertizing business. It's very easy to pass a bill which takes someone else out of business. When that time comes that it affects your business or my business, when that time comes it affects your profession or someone else's profession whose close to you, when that time comes it affects your job and your income and livelihood then you will take into consideration I hope the fact that we took several steps at one time way down the road. Now the reference was made here last week that Mrs. Johnson, the lovely wife of our President several years ago, started the highway beautification program. It's a laudable program. I would support the general consensus of it. I would suggest that if we told Mrs. Johnson that she couldn't advertize over her T.V. stations in Texas that the cry of the protest would be swift in forthcoming. I would suggest, and I would hope, there will be other bills in this Legislature that are going to be more far reaching than this as it affects private enterprise. We always hear talk about how the tax load affects the people of the State of Nebraska. The tax load is a serious load. No one would discount that. I hope that you remember when you control businesses, when you control the way a man can spend his money, when you wipe out a business and you say in affect that you shall no longer exist, when that time comes we are taking into ourself a responsibility which is serious indeed. I wonder why, and no one has ever told me why, those billboards are allowed to remain there within the city limits. Is it perhaps because the political pressure is too great from that area? Is it because those individuals who lease that land perhaps secure far higher rates of return and are thereby able to influence the Congress that they should be allowed to exact that revenue? Whereas those billboards that